

21. The cleansing method according to claim 10 wherein said polymer is at least one selected from the group consisting of an acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene resin, a styrene-acrylonitrile resin, and an acrylonitrile-butadiene rubber.

22. The cleansing method according to claim 10 wherein said acid is sulfuric acid.

23. The cleansing method according to claim 22 wherein said acid comprises 10 to 100 moles based on the total monomer unit of the polymer.

24. The cleansing method according to claim 10 wherein said cleansing processing agent further comprises an inorganic pigment.

25. The cleansing method according to claim 10 wherein said polymer is pulverized before the hydrophilic groups are added by the acid or alkali.

REMARKS

I. Election/Restriction

In paragraphs 1-6 of the Office Action, the Examiner acknowledged that Applicant elected without traverse to prosecute claims 10-18. Applicant again acknowledges the election.

II. Claim Rejections Under Section 112

In paragraphs 7-8 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 10-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2 as being indefinite. The Examiner states that the term "ionic groups" in claims 10-18 is used to mean "hydrophilic groups." In response, Applicant has amended independent claim 10 to use the term "hydrophilic groups."

III. Claim Rejections under Section 102/103

In paragraphs 9-13 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 10-18 as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)(e) or as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over any one of the following sixteen references: (1) Dyer et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,767,168; (2)

Carpenter et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,725,780; (3) Suzuki, U.S. Patent No. 5,723,363; (4) Blankenship et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,304,707; (5) Argabright et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,397,748; (6) Helke, U.S. Patent No. 4,237,004; (7) Bahr et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,131,563; (8) Inagaki et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,994,423¹; (9) Matsubara, U.S. Patent No. 4,645,698; (10) Matsubara, U.S. Patent No. 4,686,776; (11) Misaka et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,500,652; (12) Walker et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,425,463; (13) Heyl et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,639,378; (14) Turner et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,425,461; (15) Isohata, U.S. Patent No. 5,789,076; and (16) Derwent Abstract 1997-490834.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claim 10 to clarify that the cleansing processing agent is comprised of a polymer having acrylonitrile and at least one of styrene and conjugate diene as constituent unit and into which are introduced hydrophilic groups by adding an acid or an alkali to the polymer. Applicant believes that this limitation is neither taught nor suggested by the cited references. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection under Sections 102 and 103.

CONCLUSION

In view of the present amendments to Applicant's claims and corresponding remarks contained herein, reconsideration and allowance of the application by the Examiner is requested. Applicant submits that the independent claims and the claims depending therefrom are patentable over the art cited by the Examiner and are in condition for allowance, which action is hereby respectfully requested. The art applied by the Examiner has been reviewed by Applicant and is believed not to anticipate or render obvious any claims in the application.

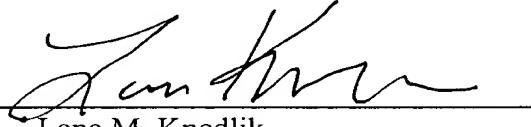
¹ Applicant notes that the Examiner cited Inagaki et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,994,423 (the "Inagaki Patent"), which was filed on October 6, 1998 and issued on November 30, 1999, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and § 103. Applicant notes that Mr. Inagaki is a common inventor in both the cited reference and the present application. Moreover, the work disclosed in both references was performed at the request of Sony Corporation, the assignee of both the Inagaki Patent and the present application. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the Inagaki Patent is an improper reference because it is a description of applicant's own previous work. See MPEP § 2136.05.

Respectfully submitted,

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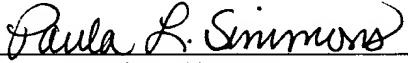
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